DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 791 JC 930 273

TITLE	Trends in Gender Equity: Vocational Education Resource Package.
INSTITUTION	Evaluation and Training Inst., Los Angeles, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY	California Community Colleges, Sacramento. Office of the Chancellor.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	23p.; Project supported by funds from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Act (Title II, Part A). Cover title varies slightly.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Ancillary School Services; Community Colleges; *Counseling Services; Displaced Homemakers; Educational Resources; *Females; Nontraditional Students; One Parent Family; Pregnant Students; *Program Descriptions; Sex Bias; Sex Fairness; *Special Needs Students; Two Year Colleges; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*California Community Colleges

ABSTRACT

Designed to assist community college administrators and faculty in enhancing vocational education programs and services, this resource package explores gender equity efforts in vocational programs in the California Community Colleges (CCC), describing successful program strategies currently in use in the colleges. The opening section of the report reviews gender equity legislation in California, provides information on the current distribution of gender equity funds within the CCC, and describes the target populations for funding (i.e., single parents/single pregnant women, displaced homemakers, and students enrolled in courses with 80% of more opposite sex enrollment). Next, the report provides descriptions of the following six gender equity programs in the CCC: (1) Project STEP-UP: Preparing Women for the Trades, designed to increase skilled female workers in the skilled trades; (2) Elimination of Sex Bias mini grants, currently in use at more than 30 CCC colleges, to encourage men and women to enter vocational programs which are non-traditional for their sex; (3) New Horizons, a program providing special services and courses for single parents and displaced homemakers; (4) LINKS, a program that prepares women for careers in non-traditional technical fields; (5) Skills Training for New Californians, providing support services to immigrant single parents, single pregnant women, and displaced homemakers; and (6) Displaced Homemakers Outreach with Community-Based Organizations, providing counseling and education services to dependent women. The final section reviews specific recruitment and retention strategies of successful gender equity programs. A list of program contact people is included. (PAA)

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Trends in Gender Equity

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Chancellor's Office
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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESOURCE PACKAGE

Trends in Gender Equity

Prepared for the
Chancellor's Office of the
California Community Colleges

Prepared by the
Evaluation and Training Institute
12300 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 420
Los Angeles, California 90025

1993

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESOURCE PACKAGES (VERPs)

Vocational Education Resource Packages (VERPs) are made available to the California Community Colleges through a special project grant. VERPs are designed to assist community college administrators and faculty in enhancing vocational education programs and services, especially those serving special population students.

Each VERP contains information about successful program strategies and ideas currently in use in vocational education programs at the California Community Colleges. VERPs enable the dissemination of various program approaches to interested colleges, and provide resource materials to improve or develop programs which respond to local needs.

The VERPs are organized along thematic lines based on the needs of California Community Colleges. This VERP provides information on gender equity programs.

VERP Titles	
Industry-Education Partnerships	Partnerships with the Public Sector
School-to-Work Transitions	Multi-media Instruction
Trends in Gender Equity	Promising Practices
Career Development	Staff Development
Rural Programs	Grant Writing

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The special project grant that enabled the development and dissemination of the VERPs also provides for technical assistance. **Technical assistance services and workshops are available free of charge through June 1993.** The workshops and technical assistance will be provided by community college faculty and other resource people with relevant experience and know-how to share. Should your college wish to have an on-site workshop, or should you desire additional information, please contact:

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BACKGROUND

In 1984, the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges made gender equity in vocational education a priority, and established the position of Gender Equity and Civil Rights specialist. In large part, the implementation of the Carl Perkins Act of 1984 and the re-authorized Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (VATEA Title II, Part B, Section 221 and 222) have served as the foundation for gender equity's positive development in the community colleges. Empowered by legislative funding, the colleges have developed effective methods for serving single parents, displaced homemakers, single pregnant women, and students pursuing vocational programs non-traditional to their sex. Thus, gender equity has evolved into a mainstream program, and the term "gender equity" has come to encompass programs to eliminate sex bias, and to provide services to single parents/single pregnant women and displaced homemakers.

The figure on page 3 illustrates the current distribution of gender equity funds. No less than 10.5 percent of California's basic VATEA grant is earmarked for gender equity programs to serve the specified target populations:

- **Single parents/single pregnant women**
  A single parent is defined as being unmarried or legally separated from their spouse, and having custody or joint custody of a minor child or children. Single pregnant women are also included in this targeted group.

- **Displaced homemakers**
  Identifying displaced homemakers is particularly complex given the language of the VATEA legislation. A displaced homemaker is an adult who:

  i) has worked primarily without remuneration to care for the home and family, and for that reason has diminished marketable skills;

  ii) has been dependent on public assistance or on the income of a relative but is no longer supported by such income;

iii) is a parent whose youngest dependent child will become eligible to receive assistance under the program for Aid to Families with Dependent Children program under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act within 2 years of parent's application for assistance under this Act; **or**

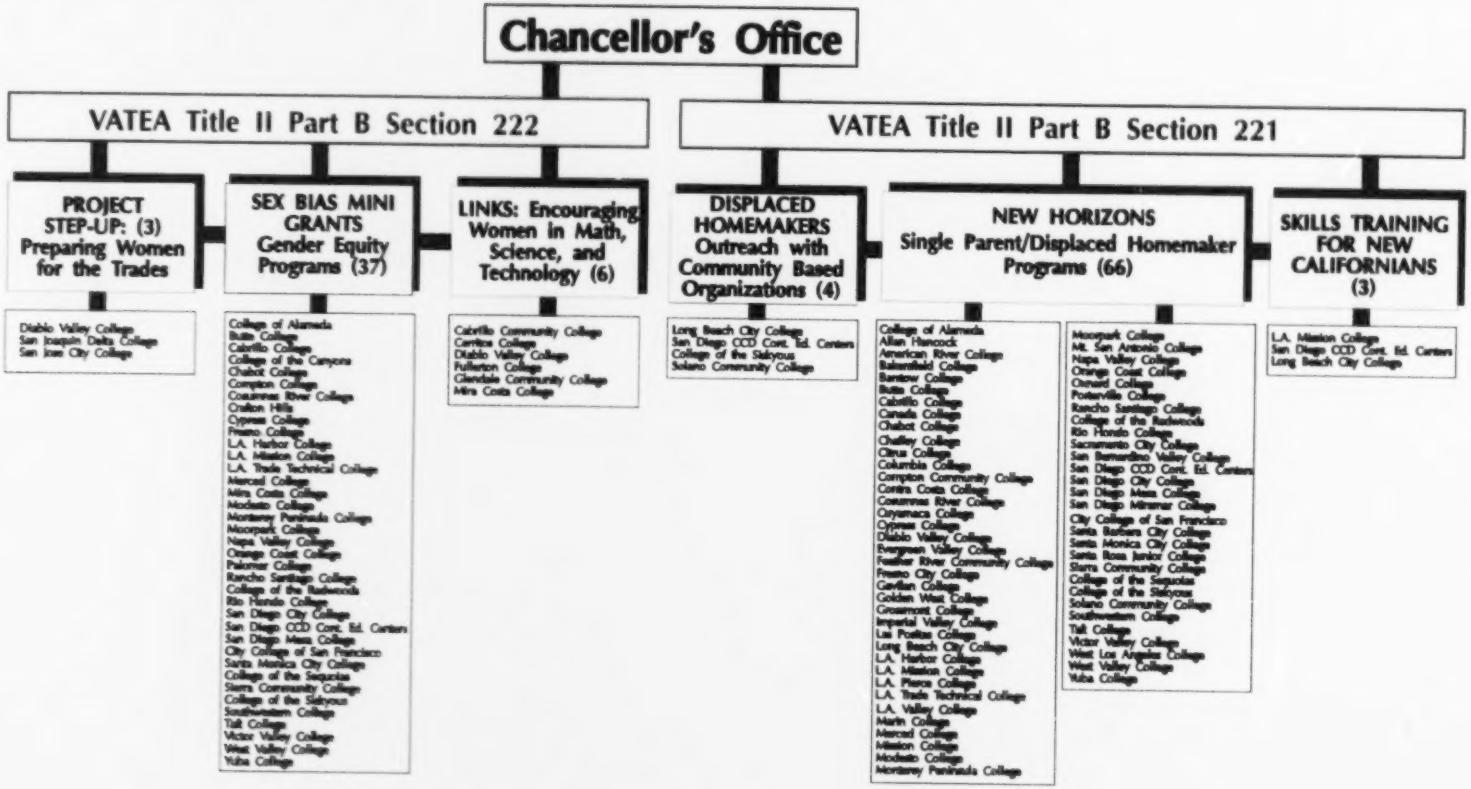
iv) is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining any suitable employment.

Criminal offenders meeting the above characteristics are also defined as displaced homemakers.

- **Non-traditional students**
  Non-traditional students are students who are enrolled in a course or program in which members of the opposite sex are predominant. Gender imbalanced vocational programs are defined as having 80 percent or more same-sex students.

Directors of gender equity programs conduct staff development, direct sensitivity training, help implement curricular changes, provide resource information and direct services to the targeted populations described above. In addition, project implementors have continued to increase gender equity awareness on their campuses and in their communities.

Through statewide and college-based gender equity programs, thousands of disadvantaged students are receiving the vocational training and support services they need to achieve economic success. This VERP highlights a sample of the many effective programs which are being implemented today in our community colleges.



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CASE STUDIES

Project STEP-UP: Preparing Women for the Trades

Project STEP-UP: Preparing Women for the Trades, was developed by the Chancellor's Office in response to the concern that so few women were exploring careers in the skilled trades. A January 1991 U.S. Department of Labor study reported that in 1988 only 2 percent of all employed women were working in the skilled trades, which was specifically defined as precision production and repair operations. Thus, the objective of Project Step-Up is to create marketable skilled female workers who have a high self-esteem and a knowledge of what to expect in the workplace.

The intent of Project Step-Up is to provide the following resources: career awareness, recruitment, remedial instruction, preparation in the various trades with the pertinent coursework, support services such as counseling and upper body strength conditioning, as well as providing a vehicle for networking with industry leaders ensuring apprenticeships and job placement opportunities at the conclusion of the program.

Local community colleges are eligible to compete for the Project Step-Up grant, which is awarded to those demonstrating the willingness to establish and maintain special support systems for the retention and success of women in non-traditional vocational trades programs. Currently, the project is operating at three local community colleges: Diablo Valley College, San Joaquin Delta College, and San Jose City College.

In the spirit of collaborating with business and industry leaders, San Joaquin Delta College organized three advisory committees (apprenticeships, community outreach, job placement) to assist with project implementation. These advisory committees are instrumental in driving the direction of the local program. On the apprenticeship committee, local business representatives are responsible for evaluating the mentor program and curriculum. The Community/Education Advisory Committee coordinates services and referrals with other local agencies, and includes representatives from the local Regional Occupational Programs (ROPs), local secondary schools, and various community

organizations. The job placement committee is composed of representatives from both public and private interest groups including representatives from the local Private Industry Council, local businesses, large corporations such as General Mills, and local governmental entities, such as the California Transportation Commission. The job placement committee serves to create job options for participants upon program completion.

San Joaquin Delta College's emphasis has been in developing a stable network system of potential employers in an effort to ensure that program participants will enter into the workforce. As the program develops and more business leaders become involved with the program, there are plans to develop more job placement opportunities with the business and organizations represented on the advisory committees.

San Jose City College has taken a very different approach, heavily concentrating its efforts on recruitment into the program. Program staff release press announcements to local newspapers, send informational brochures to community organizations, apprenticeship programs and county GAIN and EDD offices. The major component of the program at San Jose City College is a sequence of two classes designed to present non-traditional careers for women students. A summer session readiness course is offered annually, and a vocational career guidance course is available each fall and spring semester. The summer session readiness course deals with the more fundamental aspects of career preparation including time management, assertiveness training, building self esteem and financial budgeting. The vocational career guidance course is designed to provide participants a technical overview of various trade opportunities including hands-on experience and weight training classes. One of the program objectives is to prepare course participants with the appropriate information for choosing a vocational education or apprenticeship program at the conclusion of the two courses.

Elimination of Sex Bias Mini Grants

The Chancellor's Office has sought to combat negative stereotypes by eliminating gender bias in textbooks, classroom environments, and services. Progress in these areas has been made through special projects at the local level. Since 1983, the Chancellor's Office has funded college-based programs to encourage women and men to enter and complete vocational programs which are non-traditional for their sex.

This includes providing the support services necessary for student retention, and re-educating instructors, administrators, counselors, and staff about ways to expand students' vision for their careers and financial success. Elimination of Sex Bias mini grants are awarded to colleges through a competitive RFP process, and are used to conduct diverse activities and events geared to address these barriers. More than thirty colleges currently have a mini grant.

Although the majority of vocational programs offered at the community colleges are gender-balanced, several remain imbalanced, having 80 percent or more same-sex students. The reasons behind these imbalances are complex. Combating gender stereotypes is difficult. Institutional barriers exist not only at the colleges, but in the labor market as well, and students' personal biases also limit their possible fields of study.

Colleges have been very innovative in developing creative program activities and events. For instance, Moorpark College developed and produced a video presentation on acquaintance/date rape to supplement sexual harassment workshops conducted by program staff. Workshops have been presented to many classes on request and special meetings have been held with college athletic teams to discuss sexual stereotypes in the context of acquaintance rape. Other colleges have also attempted to address the topic of sexual harassment by conducting staff development activities and publicity campaigns.

New Horizons

For thousands of students, community college vocational education programs represent the chance to break the cycle of poverty. Single parents and women who have been displaced from their roles as primary caregivers in the home are particularly vulnerable to poverty, and are in need of vocational training that will enable them to attain economic self-sufficiency. Their educational and training needs frequently exceed those of other community college students. Childcare, transportation, life skills counseling, financial aid, and self-esteem support groups are just a few of the types of services local colleges provide single parent and displaced homemaker participants.

Prior to 1991, the community colleges received an allocation of funds to serve single parents and displaced homemakers according to a formula

based on college enrollment, socio-economic factors, local community population, and need. Revisions to the legislation called for the colleges to compete for funds, in order that funds be expended in areas that demonstrated the greatest need. Sixty-six of the 107 colleges currently receive funds to serve single parents and displaced homemakers, under the name of "New Horizons." These programs include student mentoring and orientation programs for re-entry students, specialized matriculation programs, life skills courses, battered women counseling, and guest speaker workshops, to name a few.

New Horizons programs are integral in assisting women to become economic self-sufficient, and are commonly implemented in conjunction with sex bias program. For instance, Yuba College has been awarded both grants, which are operated in cooperation resulting in lowered administrative costs and increased level of services. The gender equity programs at Yuba College are operated from the reentry center. Funds are expended to conduct workshops, produce Yuba's newsletter and provide direct services and referrals to clients.

LINKS: Encouraging Women in Math, Science, Technology Subjects and Careers

Like other gender equity programs, the LINKS program is intended to increase access to vocational programs which have been historically dominated by one gender. Overcoming a lack of basic technology and math skills has been a challenge for female students and has complicated community college efforts to attain gender balance in vocational programs.

Historically, math and science fields have had an alarmingly low representation of women. One reason often cited is that women suffer from math anxiety, or do not receive the encouragement which their male peers receive. Over the years, colleges have responded by implementing tutoring and confidence building programs for women enrolled in math and science courses. The LINKS program was launched to provide a network of these local efforts designed to prepare women for technology and vocational training, and ultimately for careers in non-traditional technical fields.

Six community colleges are currently implementing LINKS projects. The programs are housed at Cabrillo Community College, Cerritos College,

Diablo Valley College, Fullerton College, Glendale Community College and MiraCosta College. Local programs provide the academic support for returning students and other non-traditional students. The programs are formulating business and industry networks to develop placement programs for participants.

The LINKS program is similar to Project Step-Up in that its main objective is to enroll women in non-traditional courses. Glendale Community College has used grant monies to develop collaborative relationships with local high schools, with the intention of exposing high school girls to non-traditional options. Activities include an annual college fair for high school students sponsored by the vocational education department. In an effort to generate interest in vocational education, high school students are allowed the opportunity to pre-register at the college fair for the fall semester.

Diablo Valley College is the only college that has been awarded both a Project Step-Up and LINKS grant, and the nature of the grants has fostered an effective union. One of the successful activities conducted by program staff is the "Math Confidence Program," which aims to provide a non-threatening approach for participants to overcome their feelings of math anxiety, sharpen their critical thinking and analytical skills, and improve their decision making abilities. Components of this program include math tutoring, weekly math support groups, networking with high school counselors, math workshops and follow-up activities.

Skills Training for New Californians

Skills Training for New Californians addresses the particular needs of immigrant single parents by providing support services to them in an effort to increase their self-sufficiency. The program targets and serves immigrant single parents/single pregnant women and displaced homemakers by introducing job readiness skills, placement opportunities and/or non-traditional vocational enrollment in an effort to increase their self-sufficiency. Currently, the program is in operation at Long Beach City College, San Diego Community College District Continuing Education Center, and Los Angeles Mission College. Services are delivered through the existing English as a Second Language (ESL) programs on these college campuses. The project's primary goal is to break the poverty cycle for New Californians.

In general, the Skills Training for New Californians programs average about 40 participants each, and their main goal is to provide the women with basic resource information and services, such as:

- Service referrals to CBOs for childcare and counseling;
- Career and education awareness workshops;
- Job readiness training;
- Employer/mentor networking; and
- English tutoring.

The program at Long Beach City College operates under the umbrella of its Amnesty Program. Since its implementation in the 1991-92 academic year, the program has aimed to provide improved job opportunities by utilizing linkages and partnerships established within the Long Beach City College system and with the business and industry community at large.

An advisory board has been established to address the needs of the program participants. The board is composed of representatives from local businesses, including Nissan, Toyota and Caterpillar-Shepherd; church and community organizations; and, college representatives, including vocational instructors, and campus administrative directors of the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs.

Although Long Beach City College's program is intended specifically for those women interested in non-traditional vocational training, program staff provide general activities for program participants, such as self-esteem courses and life skills management training. Program staff also publish a Spanish/English newsletter which highlights exceptional students and various campus events to assist ESL students practice language skills. A forthcoming community resource manual which will provide information on various community and government services. Other activities include conducting local high school and community outreach presentations.

Program participants appear to have benefitted from their participation in the program. In fact, most of the Spanish-speaking women participating in the program have continued their education past the required 40 hours of ESL. Since its inception, the women tracked in this program have had a higher retention rate than the general campus figure in the vocational programs.

Displaced Homemakers Outreach with Community-Based Organizations

The National Displaced Homemakers Network (NDHN) reports that nearly three out of five of the 16 million displaced homemakers in the U.S. live at or below the poverty level simply because they lack the appropriate skills for employment. The Displaced Homemakers Outreach with Community-Based Organizations programs funded through the Chancellor's office, target women who are unequipped to be self-sufficient, and are in need of counseling and education services. The programs are designed to be one-stop resource centers to facilitate the transition from dependency to self-sufficiency making the transition less overwhelming. The four campuses which received the grants for this project have attempted to develop the resource centers as outposts of the colleges that are based in the community.

The implementation strategies of these projects vary widely to meet the needs of the local community. Two examples demonstrate the wide range of participant needs that each program strives to meet.

- The Solano Community College in association with the Jail Outreach Program of Youth and Family Services initiated *WORC - Women's Opportunities in Re-entry and Careers, an Incarcerated Women's Re-entry Program.* The purpose of the program is to provide services for incarcerated women and women that have recently been released from jail. Program staff provides skill assessment and career workshops, counseling, and parenting workshops in the hopes of easing the women's re-entry into society.

- The Long Beach City College program is housed off-campus and serves as information clearinghouse for displaced homemakers. Generally services are provided to pregnant teen dropouts and Long Beach City College students referred by the Women's Center at the college. Program staff are trained to provide intake and assessment, financial aid and enrollment assistance, skills training and counseling services.

KEY ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

Successful gender equity programs share common characteristics. Key elements for success are presented below.

Recruitment Strategies

Colleges have instituted comprehensive outreach programs in order to recruit target populations and ensure that eligible students are aware of available opportunities. Comprehensive outreach and recruitment includes:

- **Networking with local high schools**
  Coordinating activities with local high schools has proven effective for encouraging girls and boys to enroll in non-traditional community college vocational programs.

- **Collaborating with community-based organizations**
  Developing linkages with community service agencies serves a dual purpose in facilitating referrals to the college's programs, and providing additional resource information and opportunities for students. Networking with women's clinics, crisis centers and similar organizations has proven to be particularly valuable.

- **Coordinating with other campus support services**
  Networking with college personnel will increase general awareness of gender equity, resulting in campus referrals to the program.

Comprehensive outreach and recruitment calls not only for the development of strategic relationships, but also for widespread publicity. The ability to successfully market program activities will increase the level of student involvement. Many project implementors have developed newsletters, designed posters and announced program activities in campus-wide newspapers and bulletins.

Retention Strategies

Maintaining a successful gender equity program requires retention efforts. Program success depends greatly upon the retention rate of the participants. Key barriers to retention include:

- **Poor Academic Performance**
  Students who repeatedly perform poorly and lack the resources necessary for improving their academic performance become disinterested in completing the vocational program.

- **Financial Difficulties**
  Many participants without financial aid and/or financial assistance with childcare, transportation and related expenses are unable to attend the community college.

- **Outside Stresses/Lack of Self-Esteem**
  Students lacking confidence in their performance or drive to continue their program can easily become discouraged by problems such as children, transportation and finances.

To minimize or eliminate these hindrances, programs can provide support services, such as childcare, transportation, and support groups. Program staff also frequently offer:

- **Tutoring Services**
  Academic assistance provided in groups or individually is helpful for many students. Many colleges coordinate tutoring services with the Learning Resource Center.

- **Financial Assistance**
  The intent of gender equity programs is to provide program participants with the skills enabling them to become economically self-sufficient. For many students, attending the college to acquire these skills is an economic hardship. Some colleges have helped to offset the cost of textbooks by developing a revolving collection for use by gender equity participants. Program staff should exhaust all means for providing financial aid to program participants.

- **Self-Esteem/Confidence Building Exercises**
  For many of the participants in the gender equity programs the decision to attend or return to college may have been very threatening and intimidating. It is important that services are available which reinforce positive self-esteem. Support group sessions are excellent forums for discussing issues pertaining to self-esteem and personal growth.

Follow-up activities are essential to the scope of any gender equity program. For instance, Modesto Junior College requires all program participants receiving financial aids to attend a monthly meeting, which aid in retention by connecting them to program.

Counseling

The counseling component of a gender equity program is extremely important. In addition to general academic counseling which is provided to all students, program participants need access to individual counseling specific to gender equity issues. Program staff should be well-versed in providing life skills training and career/goal assessment services. Initial assessment to determine students' needs and aptitudes is particularly important. Students served in gender equity programs frequently require counseling services ranging from childcare referrals to career counseling to self-esteem building.

Administrative Buy-in/Campus Climate

Administrative support is crucial for gender equity programs to receive such basics as equipment, priority for services, and the general operation of a program. An effective means for garnering support has been the implementation of staff development activities specifically geared towards gender equity issues. Workshops directed to faculty not only introduce the program to them, but help develop a network for vocational referrals within the college. Staff development includes sensitivity training, and awareness raising among faculty. With support from faculty, programs maintain a higher standing on campus, and are more visible.

RESOURCES

Project Step-Up Projects

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New Horizons Projects

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Skills Training for New Californians

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Long Beach City College
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Displaced Homemakers Outreach with Community-Based Organizations Projects

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Long Beach Displaced
Homemaker Resource Center
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Elimination of Sex Bias Mini Grant Projects

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New Horizons Regional Coordination Project

The New Horizons Regional Coordination project provides technical assistance to community college personnel related to gender equity programs. Regional coordinators have been trained to serve as resource experts in coordination, program implementation and strategic planning. The figure on page 17 illustrates the regional distribution.

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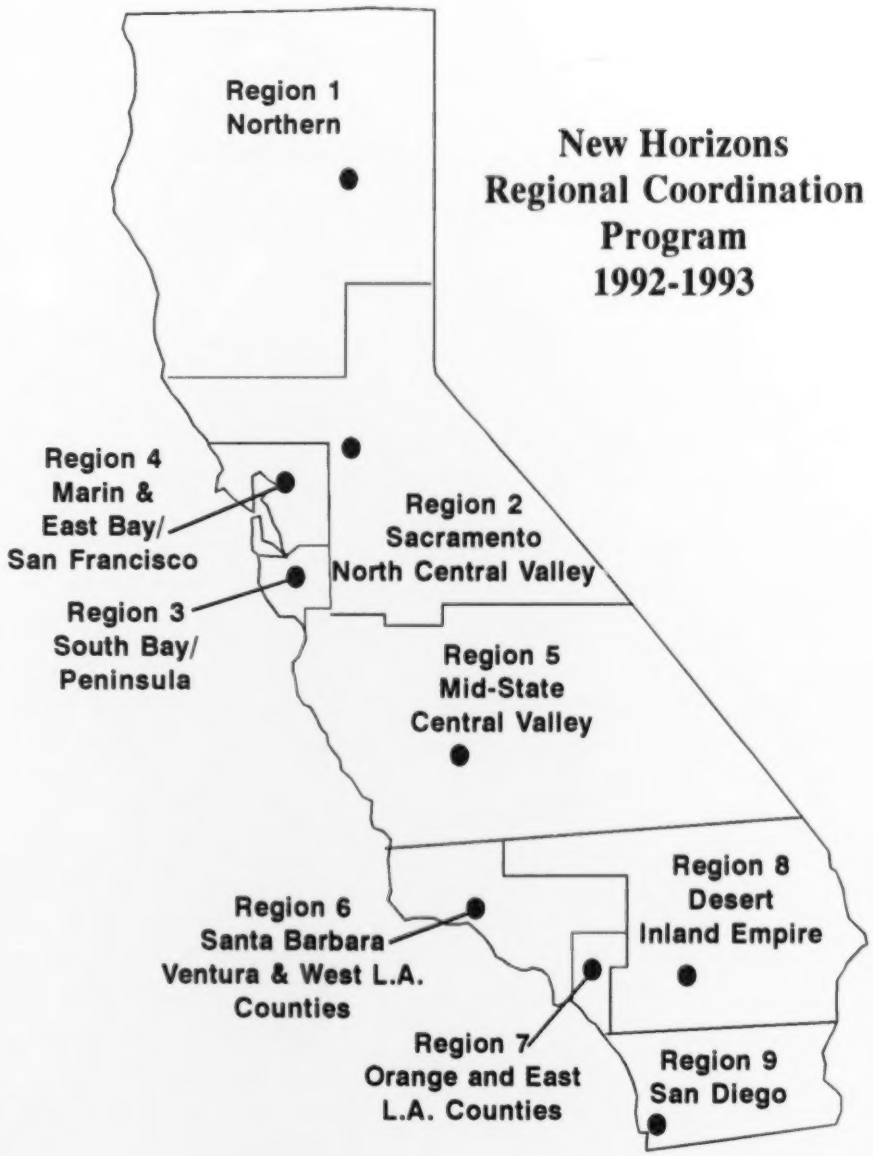
Region 1
Northern
New Horizons
Regional Coordination
Program
1992-1993
Region 4
Marin &
East Bay/
San Francisco
Region 2
Sacramento
North Central Valley
Region 3
South Bay/
Peninsula
Region 5
Mid-State
Central Valley
Region 8
Desert
Inland Empire
Region 6
Santa Barbara
Ventura & West L.A.
Counties
Region 7
Orange and East
L.A. Counties
Region 9
San Diego